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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005562

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/21/2021

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/ARMENIA: JOINT COMMISSIONS NON-PAPER

REF: A. ANKARA 5471

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2410

Classified by Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for  
Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Turkish MFA Deputy Director General for Caucasus and Central Asia Huseyin Avni Karslioglu called us in September 21 to give us, in confidence, a copy of Turkey's response to Yerevan's April 19 non-paper on joint commissions (reftels). The Turkish non-paper proposes an "ad-hoc" committee convene in the near term to submit recommendations on the make-up and terms of reference of a "Joint Commission of Historians" (JCH). It characterizes this process as the part of the "first cluster" of talks as outlined in the Armenian April 19 non-paper (e.g., on genocide claims) and asserts that these talks would further the dialogue on political and economic issues, referred to as the "second cluster" of talks (ref B). The Turkish non-paper contains an annex or "food-for-thought" paper that proposes a terms of reference concerning the "first cluster" of talks. Text of non-paper as received is in para 4. Text of annex as received is in para 5.

[1](#)2. (C) Karslioglu said the JCH has to be established. It is the one element the previous Armenian paper again tried to water down; the Prime Minister is personally and publicly invested in the issue. Turkey's response has been delayed since April because the non-paper had to be approved at the political level, Karslioglu said, including by PM Erdogan himself. The MFA fought hard to get it cleared, he asserted, repeating that Turkey cannot open the borders or establish official relations at this time (ref A). Armenia has made no gestures, such as withdrawing from even one rayon, that would give Turkey any political cover to take such a step. In fact, he said, some are arguing for a more hard-line approach to Armenia, including reducing the number of overflight permissions (Karslioglu said he currently approves them daily), cutting the number of Istanbul-Yerevan flights or tightening the visa regime.

[1](#)3. (C) Karslioglu said that if talks were to occur soon, the MFA would prefer to meet the Armenians before he and Deputy Under Secretary Uzumcu take up their next assignments in late November/early December.

[1](#)4. (C) Begin Text of Non-Paper, dated September 8:

In pursuit of establishing a benevolent atmosphere between our peoples, our countries have recognized the need to display courage, determination and commitment unprejudiced by past and current circumstances. The course of our meetings over the last year has been a clear manifestation of this

understanding. In this spirit, we have dedicated ourselves to exploring the opportunities, and to employing the existing potential between our countries with a view to furthering our relations. This is already an achievement since we seek to construct a common future that rests on a shared understanding, constructive dialogue, and cooperation.

It is with these thoughts in mind that we acknowledge that the issues of mutual concern are not limited to past and present challenges, but they should also address the emerging opportunities in a forward looking fashion. We aim to reconcile diverging interpretations of what took place during a particular period of our history. This will significantly help the normalization process between our countries.

Obviously, furtherance of our dialogue would rely on mutual trust, as well as a shared willingness. Therefore, insofar as the first "cluster" suggested by the "non-paper" dated 19 April 2006 is concerned, a committee of "ad hoc" nature could be employed, to explore the prospects of establishing a Joint Commission of Historians (JCH). The "ad hoc" committee could comprise of representatives nominated from the academic and official institutions of Turkey and Armenia respectively. The "ad hoc" committee could finalize work within an agreed period; and it could submit recommendations to the ongoing process of talks.

As for the "Terms of Reference" required for the issues in this field, including the work of the "ad hoc" committee, a food-for-thought paper is proposed herewith.

We believe that successful deliberations of the "ad hoc" committee culminating in the establishment of a JCH will set the already existing momentum and accumulated energy in

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motion, generating the desirable synergy to enhance the whole spectrum of our relations. This will assist in furthering our dialogue on the issues of political and economic nature that are referred to in a proposed second "cluster" in the aforementioned "non-paper". The same were outlined in our last "non-paper" dated 10 March 2006, in the form of an Inter-Governmental Commission and its sub-committees that would exclusively work to this end.

These sub-committees are envisaged to address the political as well as economic issues to bring our expectations in this sphere to a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

Against this backdrop, we are keen to move forward in pursuing a constructive dialogue. Irrespective of the daunting task ahead of us, we believe in the merits of seizing the momentum and exploring the existing potential. This, we trust, will offer a mutual understanding and hope for satisfactory progress.

End Text.

15. (C) Begin text of the annex:

Annex to "non-paper"  
(food-for-thought paper)

The proposed "terms of reference" for the work concerning the issues that fall under the first "cluster" are outlined here below.

The proceedings aiming to reconcile diverging interpretations of history, and enhancing the whole spectre (sic) of social and cultural ties between Turkey and Armenia, will

-- comprise the work on an "ad hoc" committee that will accommodate three representatives from each party who will be nominated by the historical societies, directorates of archives and academies/institutes of sciences respectively,

-- the "ad hoc" committee will explore prospects of establishing a Joint Commission of Historians (JCH) with a view to finalizing its work within a mutually agreed period, i.e. three months; and in light of its proceedings, it will submit recommendations to the Turkish and Armenian officials,

-- the work that falls under in the first "cluster" will also comprise an intensive dialogue among the artists, authors, journalists, academia and the NGOs,

-- coordinate and facilitate bilateral social/cultural exchanges,

-- facilitate and accord unrestricted access to the national archives, as well as the private archives, of both countries; and to the archives of the third countries and relevant institutions as and when deemed necessary,

-- encourage and support production or commissioning of joint studies, books, conferences, seminars et cetera,

-- set up, as appropriate, working groups on specific subjects,

-- allow recording deliberations of the meetings, as appropriate.

End Text.

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